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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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Subject: "HOUSEDRESS BEAUTIFUL," Information from the home economists of the
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Remember how our grandmothers used to say "handsome is as handsome does?" Well, that old-fashioned beauty advice still applies to many things today--especially to housedresses and aprons. A dress or apron can be attractive because of trim lines and simple good taste, and because it fits you and fits the job.

But just because a housedress depends mainly on basic cut and design features rather than decoration for its good looks, it doesn't have to be plain Jane. Thank ~~heaven~~ the days of those ugly Mother Hubbards are over!

And the days of the frowzy flossies should be about over too. . . those impractical housedresses and aprons trimmed to the teeth with ruffles and dangling bows and appliqued flower pots. Some of them may have been cute the first week they went on kitchen duty. But if the trimming became bedraggled and wore out long before you had your wear out of them, they couldn't be classified as cute for very long.

Maybe you've been listening to this with one quizzical eyebrow raised because you've often had a hard time finding what you want in ready-to-wear or patterns. Well, if so, you'll be glad to hear there're new, scientifically developed designs for dresses and aprons available now that're pretty as well as practical.

For several years, clothing specialists in the U. S. Department of Agriculture have been working on the problem of women's work clothes, and they've now completed original designs for 15 housedresses and aprons. Their new bulletin, "Dresses and Aprons for Work in the Home", is just off the press. It has photo-

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pattern or ready-made for working around the house.

Some of these designs have been adapted by a commercial pattern company and are available in the stores. Next time you're pattern shopping--if you want to be sure you're getting one of these designs, look for the words "designed by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture" on the front of the pattern envelope. If you'd like to send for a free copy of the new bulletin, get your pencil ready, and I'll tell you at the end of the program where to write for it.

Each of the designs pictured in the bulletin has had to pass five important tests.

First, it has to be comfortable. Blouse backs, for example, are designed for action with fullness where it can respond to arm and shoulder movements. Short sleeves or shoulder wings or ruffles provide cool comfort in a hot kitchen. Waistbands are fitted easy so they help make the dress cool and allow it to move freely when you want to reach up to the top cupboard or stoop down to pick up Junior's toys. Pockets are roomy and placed conveniently at hand level where they're low enough to be out of the way of door knobs and drawer handles.

Second, a dress or apron has to have safety features. That means no dangling bows or ties in front where they might catch fire. Skirts are moderately wide, but not so full that you're likely to step on them when stooping or climbing a ladder.

Third, a garment should be time and energy saving...simple to make...easy to iron...and easy to slip into without mussing your hair.

The fourth test is durability. A garment should be made of sturdy material that can stand repeated laundering, and sewed carefully with reinforcements at pocket corners and places where buttons are sewed on, so it can take the pulls and stretches of housework.

Last but not least to be perfect, a housedress or apron must be attractive. Color's an important feature of good looks. So choose a color that's becoming to you and fits into your home, especially your kitchen.

Plain materials show soil quickly, so figured fabrics are usually best. To avoid a conglomeration of prints, you might want a geometric pattern in an apron which wouldn't fight with a flowered dress. Fabrics with colored rather than white backgrounds look prett^y longer because they don't show soil as quickly and don't look ding^y after washing. Materials with a smooth, slick surface have a crisp look and also stay neat and clean longer.

Of course these days it's often hard to find just what you want with the limited supply of cotton fabrics available in the stores, but a smooth print with a colored background is ideal if you can find it. Because cottons are rather scarce now, you'll want to buy just what material you need; or, you may have some fabric on hand which you can make up this spring.

Housedresses and aprons that're comfortable, "safe", time-and-energy-saving, durable and attractive don't have to be extravagant. For that matter, even if the clothes budget is limited, it's poor policy to wear unsuitable hasbeens, or to trip around in...and over...a trailing housecoat while you're tr^ying to do your housework. It pays in the long run to make a few durable housedresses and aprons that will stay good-looking as long as you wear them.

Now for the address on the dress and apron bulletin I mentioned. For a free copy, just send your name and address on a post card to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., and ask for Farmer's Bulletin No. 1963, "Dresses and Aprons for Work in the Home."

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